

# Monito Gecko

*Sphaerodactylus micropithecus*



**Family:** Gekkonidae  
**Order:** Squamata

## Description

The Monito gecko is the only species of the *Sphaerodactylus* genus found in Monito Island. It is a tiny reptile, usually measuring an inch and a half (3.5 centimeters) long. It has a gray body, a dark brown tail, and has two dark patches with a white dot on its neck. Juveniles are darker-colored than adults.

## Biological Information

### Reproduction

Not much is known about the reproductive biology of this species, but it is believed their mating season lasts from November through March. The exact number of surviving individuals is unknown. In the last survey performed in May 2014, 23 individuals were found.

### Habitat

The gecko can be found in leaf litter on the ground, and it hides in small crevasses and holes in Monito Island.



Distribution 

### Diet

It is assumed the geckos feed on small invertebrates such as insects and spiders. However, not much specific information has been gathered regarding their feeding habits.

### Distribution

This gecko is only found in Monito Island. This island is part of the Mona and Monito Islands Nature Reserve of Puerto Rico, and is located southwest of Puerto Rico's mainland. It is 3 miles (5 kilometers) northwest of Mona Island. Both islands are located between Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic.

## Threats

The destruction and modification of habitat by humans and exotic foreign species introduced to Monito Island, such as rats and mice, represent the biggest threats to the species.

## Conservation Measures

The species was listed under the Endangered Species Act in 1982. Monito Island is currently designated as a critical habitat for the Monito gecko. Due to controlled access to Monito Island and other protective measures set in place by the Department of Natural and Environmental Resources (DNER) of Puerto Rico, threats have been reduced. The DNER has implemented a rat eradication program in Monito, with the intention of augmenting the survival rates of the Monito gecko. Visitors are forbidden from visiting Monito Island without previous authorization, and it is given only to scientific research-related projects.

The Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, prohibits the killing, harassing, trapping, purchasing or

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selling any species, as well as parts and products derived from the species.

## Recommendations

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In order to evaluate whether the species needs more protection or if their population has improved or become stable, further studies regarding the number of individuals in the populations and the biology and habits of the species needs further research.

## References

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## Additional Information

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